



The Keynote Chronicle

Humor News from Jan McInnis
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Friending Your Friends

We scared the younger generation off of Facebook! Those of us over 40 may be more technology challenged than they are, but we took to Facebook like it was the fountain of youth. . . once we figured out how to post appropriately, that is, and not just tell each other what we had for breakfast. (If you're still doing that, stop it, now!) We didn't mean to take over Facebook, but we realized how cool it was to reconnect with long-lost childhood friends whom we thought we'd never see again because their family moved 30 miles away; now we can check in to find out if they became rock stars or at least stopped sucking their thumb.

I reconnected with my friend Liz from my Brownie and Girl Scout days because she saw my post that I was headed into her town. We made plans to meet "just for a drink." Woolly mammoths were roaming the earth when we last met, so I think we both secretly wanted to make sure the other one wasn't an axe murderer before committing to a full-fledged meal. Five minutes into the drink, with no axes in sight, we ordered food and had a wonderful time!

Though social media has made friendship more accessible, I've always known the value of friends. As someone who has spent a lot of my life as a single person, I've relied on friends for lots of things. People in a committed relationship have a built-in security blanket. If your car breaks down, your spouse/significant other *has* to help you. They might not want to, but they are kind of required to or it gets awkward at the dinner table. "Hey honey, how come you missed supper?" "You wouldn't come get me on the side of the road!" Long silence. "Oops." If you're not in a committed relationship, then you have to go the "AAA-plus-call-a-friend" route.

One of my best friendships was actually the result of a car accident in which I found myself in my Honda Civic being pushed SIDEWAYS, attached to the grill of a truck, going 60 mph on a five-lane freeway in Los Angeles. No theme park adventure ride can even come close to that one! After the "ride" was over, I (thankfully) walked away, but my little Honda didn't fare so well. I called my friend Diane at her work, and

without hesitating, or saying she needed five minutes to finish a memo, or had to ask her boss first, or even had to go to the bathroom, she left work and came to my rescue. We had known each other before then, but that rescue deepened what has now been a great 10+ year friendship. The fact that she gave me a glass of wine before taking me to the ER to be checked out might have also played a part in our bonding!

Sometimes you make friends without realizing it. In my former life, I was very active with the Alexandria Virginia Jaycees, and when I became a comedian, I had a tremendous number of Jaycee friends who supported me. From coming out to shows (between them, Mary and Ron have seen my act a million times) to letting me sleep on their couches as I crisscrossed the country working gigs, my Jaycee friends were always with me, even offering encouraging words during times of struggle.

And we've all got those friends who we haven't seen in years, but when you do see them, it feels like time hasn't passed. Right before my move to Los Angeles, I was working at a comedy club in Virginia Beach when my college friend Rhonda dropped in. We hadn't seen each other in years, and she had no idea I was a comedian. I mentioned my move,

Spotlight

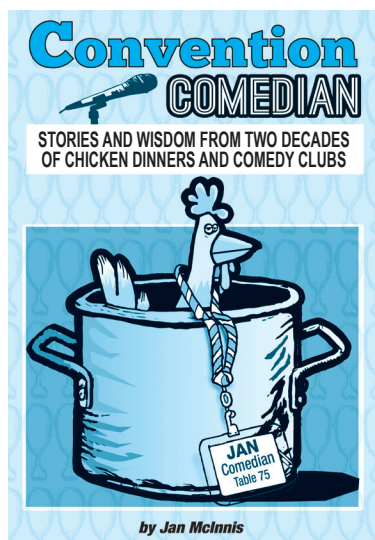
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and she said that she was actually living near LA. She just happened to be in Virginia that night, and she offered me a place to stay while I got on my feet. We don't see each other regularly now (the 60 miles to her house in LA traffic factors in), but when we do get together, we have a blast. I also once recognized a friend on an airplane: she was the flight attendant and had been my boss at a summer job 30 years earlier! We reconnected and I got free food and drinks all the way across the country!

My variety of friends is kinda cool too. I have childhood friends who knew me in my bell-bottom days, and open-mic comedian friends who knew me in my early unfunny days. I have an unusually large number of lawyer friends, and I've got friends who I don't know how we met or why we're friends. I've also got hiking friends and friends who've never set foot in REI. I have friends of my parents who I still call "Mr. and Mrs." and my siblings are three of my best friends, probably because we have endless inside jokes about the quirky things Mom and Dad did while raising us. I also have "small-dose" friends who are great in. . .well, small doses! I love 'em, but after spending some time with them, I need a break, and some more wine. And finally, I'm in a relationship with someone who is also one of my best friends. . . I think that's important.

Of course having friends takes more effort than just "liking" their birthday on Facebook once a year. I've had friends ask "How can you just fly back into town, and then head right out to a party? Don't you want to relax?" What they don't realize is that connecting with my friends *is* how I relax.

As a business owner, I have few policies in my business, but one that stands out is that I try to only work with people who are nice: you know, people I would want as friends. If someone isn't nice, I put a not-so-nice note in their database record and take 'em off the mailing list. I don't want that kind of negative energy in my life, regardless of the money.

I'm writing this article not to brag about my friends, but in the hope that it'll cause you to take a minute and appreciate yours. Make sure you surround yourself with great friends because I think you must choose carefully with whom to spend your valuable time on this planet. Thank you for spending some of it with me.

*Jan has shared her customized humor keynotes with thousands of associations and corporations, and she is coming out with her second book, titled Convention Comedian: Stories and Wisdom from Two Decades of Chicken Dinners and Comedy Clubs. Jan is also the author of "Finding the Funny FAST: How to Create Quick Humor to Connect with Clients, Coworkers and Crowds," and she was featured in the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post for her clean humor. From a recent health care client: "**Jan was, by far, one of the best speakers we've ever had.**"*

Comedian Jan's Humor Article Inside - "Friending Your Friends"



Baby Boomer Comedy Show

Jan McInnis co-stars with Kent Rader in this hilarious clean comedy show.

Check out their schedule and book them for your event at

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